

24 January 1963

MEMORANDUM RE NRO

After 12 months of operation, it appears that the NRO has failed to serve its intended purpose of providing for the management of aerial reconnaissance, manned aircraft and satellites, including ELINT satellites, in a manner which will meet the needs of all agencies carrying a responsibility in this area.

Several deficiencies are apparent to me, including:

1. The agreement does not provide for NRO authority over actual reconnaissance operations. This is evidenced by the fact that during the past year, TACKLE flights over China and North Viet Nam have been planned and executed by CIA under Scoville to meet COMOR requirements with USIB and Special Group approval, but with no NRO direction.

25X1 [redacted] The Cuban overflight program prior to October 14th was handled in this same manner; since October 14th it has been handled through SAC/JCS channels for scheduling and planning purposes with NRO, NPIC and CIA being informed after the plans had been completed. On the other hand, [redacted]

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flights over China are handled directly by JCS with the Special Group presumably using COMOR targeting but with little input or knowledge on the part of NRO, CIA or the Intelligence Community.

2. NRO responsibilities for programming and budgeting, and the related problem of management of authorized research and development and procurement including the control of appropriated funds, are not well established and are being handled under a compromise arrangement between Secretary McNamara, Secretary Gilpatric and me, with due consideration for differences with respect to the organizations, rather than a clear-cut understanding of a proper and satisfactory course of action.

3. Responsibility for planning the future of reconnaissance, including new and improved satellites, aircraft, drones and the protection of existing satellites against Soviet anti-satellite efforts, is assigned to the NRO with the proviso that all NRO advanced planning be co-ordinated with CIA. I have been informed of little in the way of long-range plans, and therefore, I question whether a sound, aggressive, constructive, forward-looking program is in the mill. The President's Intelligence



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Board has also raised this question several times.

4. There is poor linkage between NRO and USIB and, for that matter, DIA. This was abundantly clear when it became apparent that COMOR had not worked out a targeting plan for the first flight of LANYARD scheduled in February, and it developed that the NRO had ruled that, last summer, the COMOR Committee should not be briefed on the LANYARD program for security reasons and hence COMOR (with the exception of its Chairman) knew nothing of LANYARD until the 17th of January.

5. CIA is not a part of NRO except to the extent that they are Executive Agent for NRO programs such as OXCART. CIA representatives have been told by NRO that they are "out of the picture" and that they neither are entitled to, or necessarily should be informed on, NRO plans and programs beyond those for which they are responsible.

For all of these reasons I believe NRO should be reconsidered and a new form of organization worked out on the following lines:

1. NRO should be Executive Agent for a National Reconnaissance Plan (NRP), directed by SecDef and DCI



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jointly.

2. NRO should be directed by a DNRO, appointed by SecDef with the approval of DCI. There should be appointed a Deputy DNRO selected from CIA who should be in the chain of command, should be fully and currently informed, should enter into councils and the decisions of NRO, should be responsible for the inter-relationship and liaison between NRO and USIB and its Subcommittee, COMOR, should be Executive Agent for NRO for all projects and operations carried out within CIA, should be fully obliged to secure concurrence of DNRO and keep DNRO currently and fully informed on the developments of such projects and operations and to serve as Acting DNRO in the absence of the Director.

3. NRO should be responsible for all manned aircraft and satellite overflights over denied territory, both photographic and ELINT (but not including peripheral SIGINT operations) and should approve presentations to the Special Group where Special Group approval is required.

4. NRO should be responsible for the planning, research and development of future undertaking, utilizing the

  
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resources of military departments, CIA and the contractors for such work. Such planning for research and development should be aggressive, imaginative, adequately supported, but not duplicated.

5. NRO should have authority to employ the facilities of the Services, Joint Specified Commands and CIA in the execution of its plans. The NRO, not the agencies, should be the final authority on what is done although the NRO may delegate to the agencies responsibility for various phases of the program.

6. NRO should be responsible for reconnaissance organization, its budgeting, the preparation of the budget and its defense. The manner in which black projects are to be handled before Committees of Congress should be ironed out and, if the House Appropriations Committee agrees to the proposed reorganization of their Committee structure, then it will no longer be necessary to compartment the "CIA black projects" and the DOD projects.

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3 copies to DCI

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